

CLIP-ON WATER OR BEVERAGE BOTTLE HOLDER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention pertains to portable holders, and more particularly pertains to a water beverage bottle holder that is releasably attachable to the belt or waist of the individual. The invention is particularly useful to hold blow-molded bottles of the polyethylene terephthalate or "Pete" type commonly used as packaging containers for water, soda, juices, beer and sports drinks.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Various personal and public activities, generally of a recreational or entertainment nature, are accompanied or enhanced by having food and beverage items at hand and readily available. Such activities can include the wide range of sporting activities like walking, running, hiking, and bicycling wherein one needs both hands to be free and unencumbered; or in recreational settings such as outdoor parties and picnics, fairs and amusement parks wherein one's hands need to be free and unencumbered, but the availability of food and beverage items, especially a beverage item such as bottled water, would be desirable.

This need to increasingly felt because of the ever-increasing use and availability of a wide variety of beverages available in disposable or recyclable bottles made of polyethylene terephthalate, or "Pete." Typically, these bottles are produced through a process known as blow molding, and many factors act to limit the final design of the bottles, including recycling issues, food safety, product distribution and brand recognition. All of these factors limit the final shape and design of the bottle, resulting in configuration which becomes standard in the industry. The resulting range of Pete bottles

is therefore largely in the range of 200 ml. to 750 ml. in volume. In addition the bottles are generally designed with a smaller diameter in their mid section to allow secure placement of a printed shrink-wrapped polyethylene label or a shred paper label. This is to comply with recycling industry standards that do not allow ink contamination by direct printing onto the bottle. This quasi-standardization has created the opportunity for an improved means of securing beverage bottles for users in various activities.

One common current solution to the problem of wanting a beverage item available for various activities is to use a pouch, purse, or backpack. While the use of a pouch, purse or backpack would be feasible in some circumstances for this purpose, such as for use in hiking or at an amusement park, it would be undesirable for more robust physical activities such as bicycling, running or even brisk walking. The bulky and cumbersome nature of these items detracts from and interferes with the pleasurable engagement of such activities. Moreover, for activities such as bicycling, running or walking, where the accompanying food item would preferably be a beverage bottle of refreshing water, the use of a pouch, purse or backpack would be unnecessary. An alternative is to have the beverage bottle attached or secured to a lanyard hung about one's neck. For less rigorous activities this may be a plausible solution; however, during any vigorous physical activity the beverage bottle would impede such activity by bouncing about one's neck and torso.

Thus, the prior art discloses a number of devices that permit an individual to carry a beverage bottle or container while engaged in various physical activities and events.

For example, Magee (U.S. patent 6,394,329 B1) discloses a bottle holder having two adjacent openings of different sizes for engagement by the neck portion of a bottle.

The Falcaro patent (U.S. patent 5,810,218) discloses a bottle carrier having a u-shaped based through which a cord extends with the neck of the bottle engaged and held in position by the base while the cord can be placed about the neck.

The Brokering patent (U.S. patent 5,810,228) discloses a side loading water bottle
5 holder for attachment to the down tube of a bicycle, and includes two receiving members having apertures through which a bottle can be inserted.

The Kayali patent (U.S. patent 4,887,784) discloses an adjustable drink holder that can turn or pivot on four axes of rotation, and further includes a drink base and hoop for supporting and retaining the drink bottle.

10 The McConnell et al. patent (U.S. patent 4,828,211) discloses a foldable support that includes a pair of slidable arms attached to a back panel and a base for supporting the bottom of the beverage container.

The Harper patent (U.S. patent 4,749,112) discloses a beverage carrier that includes a tongue for insertion between the window and body of an automotive vehicle
15 and a pair of arms capable of grasping and holding the particular glass or bottle.

The Koorey et al. patent (U.S. patent 5,139,222) discloses a beverage container that includes an upper ring for receiving therein the beverage bottle and an upturned tongue for supporting the recess of the beverage can.

The Harper patent (U.S. patent 5,191,679) discloses a displaceable hinge that
20 includes a second arcuate member that slides along a first elongated member with the first member receiving therein the body of the beverage container and capable of being folded adjacent to the first elongated member.

Nonetheless, despite the ingenuity of the above devices there remains a need for a lightweight, portable water or beverage bottle holder that is easily attachable and detachable to some part of the user's clothing and does not interfere with or impede the physical activities engaged in by the individual.

5

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprehends a bottled water or beverage holder that attaches to an article of clothing so that the individual can have a beverage readily available for use. The beverage bottle holder includes a primary ring in the form of two arcuate ribs or arms. In addition to the arcuate ribs, the beverage bottle holder includes an interior, curvilinear portion or two interior, curvilinear portions that are spaced from each other by a gap that is opposite and parallel to the space that separates the distal ends of the ribs. Together, the ribs and interior curvilinear portion or portions define an opening for receiving and holding the beverage bottle. The ribs are pliable to permit the reception of the beverage bottle, and a slight space separates the ribs at their respective distal ends.

15 Each rib has an inner wall and an opposite outer wall, and the inner wall can include protrusions for facilitating the holding of the beverage bottle while the outer wall can accommodate indicia such as company logos and advertising phrases and slogans. The invention provides for expansion and flexion of the ribs and interior curvilinear portion to hold the bottle in its mid-section. It is capable of conforming to different diameter

20 bottles, and due to the memory capability of plastic resins used in the device it returns to its original shape when the bottle is withdrawn.

The beverage bottle holder includes a clip portion that permits the attachment and removal of the beverage bottle holder to and from the user's belt or waistband. The clip

portion extends downwardly and perpendicular relative to the extension of the ribs, and the clip portion includes a pair of spaced-apart legs that slip or slide on or over the waistband or belt. Each rib is connected to the clip portion through an intermediate bridging portion.

5 It is an objective of the present invention to provide a beverage bottle holder that is easily attachable to an article of clothing but does not interfere with or impede the physical activities engaged in by the wearer.

 It is another objective of the present invention to provide a beverage bottle holder that holds and secures a beverage bottle thereby freeing the user's hands for other
10 purposes.

 It is still another objective of the present invention to provide a beverage bottle holder that can accommodate thereon company logos and advertising phrases and slogans.

 It is still yet another objective of the present invention to provide a beverage
15 bottle holder that is lightweight, portable and capable of accommodating beverage bottles of various sizes and diameters.

 These and other objects, features, and advantages will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon a perusal of the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment, the accompanying drawings and the appended claims.

20 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

 Figure 1 is a perspective view of a first preferred embodiment of the bottle beverage holder of the present invention;

 Figure 2 is a top plan view of the bottle holder shown in figure 1;

Figure 3 is a sectioned elevational view of the bottle holder taken along lines III – III of the bottle holder shown in figure 2;

Figure 4 is a top plan view of a second preferred embodiment of the bottle holder of the present invention first shown in figure 1;

5 Figure 5 is a sectioned elevational view taken along lines V – V of the bottle holder shown in figure 4;

Figure 6 is a top plan view of a third preferred embodiment of the bottle holder first shown in figure 1;

Figure 7 is a sectioned elevational view taken along lines VII – VII of the bottle
10 holder shown in figure 6;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of a fourth embodiment of the bottle holder first shown in figure 1 illustrating pivotal capability in the beverage holder;

Figure 9 is a side elevational view of the bottle holder shown in figure 8 illustrating the range of pivotal motion of components of the bottle holder;

15 Figure 10 is a top plan view of a fifth preferred embodiment of the bottle holder first shown in figure 1;

Figure 11 is a sectioned elevational view taken along lines XI – XI of the bottle holder shown in figure 10; and

Figure 12 is a perspective view showing the bottle holder in use.

20

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Illustrated in figures 1 – 12 is a bottle container holder 10 and various modifications thereto. The beverage bottle holder 10 of the present invention is adapted

for easy and quick mounting to, and dismounting from, the user's clothing articles, and particularly the waistband or belt of the user. While the beverage bottle holder 10 securely holds various kinds of bottled beverages, it is particularly suited for PET plastic beverage bottles having a capacity of 200 ml to 750 ml by volume. Typically, these containers are used to dispense water, soft drinks, juice, and the like. The beverage bottle holder 10 allows the user to have his or her hands free during physical activities such as walking, hiking, bicycling and running as the bottled beverage is clipped on to the waistband or belt so that the user has a water bottle handy and readily available for use. The beverage bottle holder 10 may also be employed at spectator events where the user may only be standing or sitting. The beverage bottle holder 10 is preferably manufactured from a resilient, pliable plastic in a pressed, die cut or molded process. Applicant has found that the use of engineered plastic resins with a memory capability to obtain the necessary spring action and holding ability for the beverage bottle holder is preferred.

As shown in figures 1 – 12, the beverage bottle holder 10 includes a clip portion 12 that slides, slips or clips to the waistband or belt of the user. The clip portion 12 includes two spaced-apart, downwardly extending legs 14 for contacting and mounting to the waistband or belt. The legs 14 are disposed parallel to each other, and each leg 14 includes an inner wall 16 and an outer wall 18, and the space formed between the legs 14 defines a receiving slot or hollow 20 for the inner 16 and outer 18 walls. The resilience of the material of the legs 14 allow for a springing action which helps secure the beverage bottle holder 10 to the belt or waistband of the user. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, integrally formed to and extending outwardly from the clip portion 12 is a pair

of spaced-apart, curved intermediate bridging portions 22. It should be noted that the bridging portions 22 do not themselves contact or engage the beverage container.

As shown in figures 1 – 12, the beverage bottle holder 10 includes a pair of arcuate or curvilinear arms or ribs 24 with each rib 24 extending from each respective intermediate bridging portion 22. More specifically, each arm or rib 24 has a medial portion integrally formed to and joining with each intermediate bridging portion 22 and an opposite distal end 26. As shown in figures 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10, the distal ends 26 of the ribs 24 do not touch or contact each other but are slightly spaced from each other by an outer splice opening or gap 28. The ribs 24 are pliable and during insertion and securement of the beverage bottle, the ribs 24 flex and the distal ends 26 can be displaced from each other to facilitate beverage bottle insertion and securement. It can also be seen that the bridging portions serve as a spring mechanism, providing resistance when the distal ends 26 are pushed apart and urging a return to their normal, unstressed position.

In addition, each arm or rib 24 defines an interior rib wall 30 and an exterior rib wall 32. The external surface of the exterior rib walls 32 is flat and of such dimensions as to accommodate various types of indicia, lettering or designs like stickers, company logos, advertising slogans and phrases, sport team markings, and artistic ornamentation. In an alternative embodiment not shown, the exterior rib wall 32 can have a business or other name or logo molded into it to provide an advertising venue.

As shown in figures 1 – 12, the preferred embodiment of the beverage bottle holder 10 also includes an interior arcuate portion 34 that is adjacent and spaced inwardly from the bridging portions 22. The interior arcuate portion 34 combines with the ribs 24 to form a generally circular opening or passage 36 into and through which the beverage

bottle is inserted so that the beverage bottle can be held in place, generally near the mid-section of the beverage bottle. The springing action of the ribs 24, bridging portions 22, and interior arcuate portion 34 is such that the circular opening on passage 36 can be expanded sufficiently to allow insertion or removal of the bottle, while providing
5 sufficient pressure to firmly grip the bottle when the invention is in use. While the interior arcuate portion 34 is shown as a continuous member in figures 1 – 9, in figures 10 and 11 the interior arcuate portion 34 has a gap or splice opening 38 at its midpoint thereby forming two half arcuate portions 40 each of which is pliable to further facilitate the insertion of the beverage bottle.

10 The overall shape of the ribs 24 and the interior arcuate portion 34 approximates a cylindrical opening, thereby matching the overall cylindrical shape of beverage bottles to be held by the device. To assist in gripping the beverage bottle, the invention further includes protrusions 42 that are spaced about the interior walls 30 of the ribs 24 and the interior arcuate portion 34. These protrusions 42 can take a variety of forms. For
15 instance, Figures 1 through 3 illustrate protrusions 42 of a generally longitudinal, semi-cylindrical shape, while Figures 4 and 5 illustrate protrusions 42 of a longitudinal, rectangular shape. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate “thumbnail” protrusions. Regardless which shape is used, when the beverage bottle is inserted through the opening 36 formed by the ribs 24 and the arcuate portion 34, the protrusions 42 will exert an additional compressive
20 force against the side wall of the beverage bottle thereby assisting in the securement of the beverage bottle. The protrusions 42 are especially useful for smaller diameter bottles. The protrusions 42 bear against these smaller bottles and hold them in place securely

whereas the bottles might otherwise fit only loosely, or not at all, within the circular opening or passage 36.

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate another embodiment of the invention showing a pivot means for the beverage bottle holder 10. In figures 8 and 9 there is a unitary bridging
5 portion 22 which swivels or pivots with respect to the clip portion 12 on a shaft 44 between a use position for holding the bottle beverage and a non-use position wherein the ribs 24 and bridging portion 22 are pivoted downward and adjacent the clip portion 12.

Although not shown in the drawings, in another embodiment of the invention, the interior arcuate portion 34 would be eliminated, resulting in a roughly cylindrical opening
10 defined by the ribs 24 and the bridging portion(s) 22.

Also illustrated in the drawings is a ring attachment 46 which serves as a convenient place for a key ring to be placed, thereby allowing the holder 10 to be attached to a backpack, book bag, belt loop or similar place for storage when it is not in use.

15 The foregoing description discloses and describes several embodiments of the invention, and those skilled in the art will understand that other variations, alterations or modifications are possible and practicable, and will still come within the ambit of the invention as set forth in the following claims and equivalents thereof.